

Dân Biểu Sanchez Gửi Thư Đến Tổng Thống Bush Yêu Cầu Đưa Cộng Tình Trạng Nhân Quyền Trong Cuộc Gặp Gỡ với Thủ Tướng Việt Nam và Đề Nghị Liệt Kê Việt Nam Lại Vào Danh Sách Các Quốc Gia Có Quan Tâm Đặc Biệt

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Đề chuẩn bị cho chuyến viếng thăm Washington sắp tới của Thủ Tướng Việt Nam Nguyễn Tấn Dũng, Dân Biểu Loretta Sanchez, đồng Chủ Tịch Nhóm Việt Nam Caucus cùng các đồng nghiệp khác trong mặt lá thư thúc đẩy Tổng Thống Bush nhận mạnh tình trạng đàn áp nhân quyền tại Việt Nam và kêu gọi ông nên liệt kê Việt Nam vào danh sách các quốc gia có quan tâm đặc biệt (CPC).

Hàng năm từ khi năm 2001, Ủy Ban Hoa Kỳ về Tự Do Tôn Giáo Quốc Tế (gọi ngắn là USCIRF) đã đề nghị Hoa Kỳ nên liệt kê Việt Nam vào danh sách CPC. Bộ Ngoại Giao Hoa Kỳ đã xóa tên Việt Nam ra khỏi danh sách CPC vào tháng 11 năm 2006. Tại lúc đó Ủy Ban Hoa Kỳ về Tự Do Tôn Giáo Quốc Tế tiếp tục đề nghị Hoa Kỳ nên bỏ Việt Nam vào lại danh sách CPC. Dưới Chính Phủ Bush, Việt Nam đã được làm thành viên của Tổ Chức Thương Mại Quốc Tế (WTO), được chấp nhận Quy Chế Thương Mại Bình Thuận Vĩnh Viễn (PNTR) và được trở thành thành viên không thương mại của Hội Đồng Bảo An.

Lá thư cũng nhấn mạnh mối quan tâm đặc biệt đến các nhà đấu tranh dân chủ ôn hòa đang bị đàn áp tại Việt Nam mà Bộ Ngoại Giao không chú tâm đến. Nhờ ngụy đàn áp đó để ngăn cản lại các công nhân nhân quyền quốc tế như Bản Tuyên Ngôn Quốc Tế Nhân Quyền và qui định trong Công ước Quốc-Tế về Quyền Dân Sự và Chính Trị.

Xin vui lòng xem lá th d i đây. Đi kèm là m t copy b ng PDF.

June 20, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush

The President

The White House

Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

In light of the upcoming visit of Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to the White House, we write to express our strong concerns regarding human rights conditions in Vietnam. Despite Vietnam's claims to the contrary, human rights conditions have deteriorated in Vietnam since being granted permanent normal trade relations and ascension into the World Trade Organization in January of 2007. We hope that you will use Prime Minister Dung's visit as an opportunity to address these deteriorating conditions. We also strongly urge you to redesignate Vietnam as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has recommended that Vietnam be named a CPC every year since 2001. The State Department followed this recommendation in 2004 and 2005 but removed this CPC designation in November 2006. Since then, the Commission has continued to recommend CPC status for Vietnam. This designation was again recommended by the Commission in its May 2008 Annual Report:

The Commission maintains that the State Department's removal of the CPC designation for Vietnam in November 2006 was premature. In addition to the fact of ongoing religious freedom violations, removing the CPC designation suspended the diplomatic framework that had led to a productive bilateral engagement on religious freedom and other human rights concerns and therefore removed the potential incentives and leverage needed to urge the Vietnamese government to continue to improve its human rights record. Thus, in order to address Vietnam's persistent, severe religious freedom concerns and articulate fully to the Vietnamese government that religious freedom and related human rights are critical matters affecting bilateral relations, the Commission urges the U.S. government to re-designate Vietnam a CPC.

We are also very concerned about the numerous “prisoners of concern” currently being held in Vietnam as well as the State Department's failure to acknowledge this problem. In testimony before the United States Senate's Foreign Relations Committee in March 2008, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Christopher Hill stated that “all those individuals that the United States had identified as prisoners of concern for reasons connected to their faith” had been released by Vietnam and that for this and other reasons Vietnam “no longer qualifies as a severe violator of religious freedom.” However, in its May 2008 Report, the Commission calls into question the State Department's rationale for this finding:

The Commission believes that the State Department's attempts to define religious prisoners as those arrested for “reasons connected to their faith” makes a too rigid distinction between “political” and “religious” activity not consistent with international human rights law. The Commission maintains that there may be scores of religious “prisoners of concern,” including well-known religious freedom advocates such as Fr. Nguyen Van Ly and Nguyen Van Dai; imprisoned members of Hoa Hao, Cao Dai, and Khmer Buddhist religious communities; and United Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV) and Catholic religious leaders held under administrative detention, in violation of core human rights protections, including the freedom of religion. In many of the most recent cases, those detained organized or participated in peaceful demonstrations against religious freedom restrictions, monitored and publicized religious freedom abuses, or publicly called for legal or political reforms needed to guarantee religious freedom.

These detentions are in violation of international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Again, we hope that you will use Prime Minister Dung's upcoming visit as an opportunity to address the concerns we have described. We also strongly urge you to redesignate Vietnam as a CPC, as recommended by the Commission in its May 2008 report. United States interests in Vietnam should not be encompassed solely by trade, and we believe that the redesignation of Vietnam as a CPC will affirm our nation's role as an international protector of human rights.

###